

THE DYING NAPOLEON.*

BY MRS. CATHARINE ALLAN.

THE surf was whitening wild,
Where the shrieking sea-bird wheeled;
And rocking to their base,
The island mountains reeled.
The sullen thunder boomed,
And lightnings lit the sky—
Well might a Roman say,
"A god was soon to die."

In silence on his couch
The captive hero slept,
And vet'rans stern and gray
Unnerved as woman wept.
He heard not sob nor groan,
But the tempest raging loud—
And the murky clouds without,
He dreamed the battle's shroud!

Once more the trumpets bray—
Once more the quick drums roll—
And he braves the plunging shot
On the bridge of red Arcole.
And Egypt's deserts come
Back in the dreamer's throe,
With the grim old pyramids,
And the Mamelukes below!

The moonlit march—the halt—
The Moslem's furious shock,
The fiery death that rolled
Around the squares of rock.
And eastern thrones arose,
As realms of old romance
With Paladins engirt,
Before the conqueror's glance.

The sleeper's dream is changed—
On the icy Alp he stands,
And points the plains below
To his bronze-envisaged bands.
The battle smoke he sees
As it wildly flares about—
And hark!—that glorious smile—
Marengo's victor shout!

Again a vision comes—
In an old cathedral proud,
He stands, an emperor crowned,
Before the acclaiming crowd!
And then once more a change—
And Jena decks his brow,
And Austerlitz is won—
The world is suppliant now!

Oh! proudly then he smiles—
But fast the vision goes,
And his dark'ning brow he shades,
To look o'er Eylau's snows.
The icy dead are there,
The bleak but lurid sky,—
And he feels a shudd'ring chill,
For his fate is going by!

And fast the thick'ning plot
Comes rushing thro' his dream.
Lo! Moscow's bloody fight,
And Borodino's stream,
And Bautzen, Dresden, Elbe,
And fatal Leipsic too,
And Ligny's transient gleam,
And thou, oh Waterloo!

Upon that field he stands,
And sees his squadrons reel
Adown the slopy ridge
Where shines the British steel:
His old Imperial Guard,
It yet may win the day—
He waves his arm, and shouts,
Exulting, "*tete d'armée*."

Ay! "vet'rans to the front"—
And with suspended breath
His awe-bound followers press
Around the bed of death.
A glorious smile he wears,
He dreams he wins the day,
Crown, glory, all regained,—
Pass, mighty soul, away!

*This subject has often been the theme of poetry, but the authoress cannot remember ever to have seen an exactly similar view taken of Napoleon's dying words.